



**RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE
OF CITIES AND TOWNS**

*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

April 7, 2026

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley, Chair
House State Government and Elections
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: HOUSE BILL 7987 – AN ACT RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE – EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT**

Dear Chair Shanley and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns and our 39 member municipalities, we write to offer comments regarding House Bill 7987, which would require each city and town to develop a local emergency action plan addressing coordination and communication procedures for the operation of warming and cooling centers during periods of extreme weather, and would establish a statewide notification system in coordination with the National Weather Service and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA).

The League appreciates the sponsor's intent in introducing this legislation and recognizes the importance of ensuring that vulnerable residents have access to safe, climate-controlled spaces during extreme heat and cold events. Municipalities are often on the front lines of emergency response, and clear, coordinated planning is an important component of protecting public health and safety. We also appreciate the inclusion of the League as a partner in working with RIEMA to help inform and support the development of these plans, as municipal input will be essential to successful implementation.

We would like to respectfully highlight the proposed timeline requiring all municipalities to have these plans completed by November 15, 2026. While cities and towns are committed to this important work, the development of comprehensive emergency action plans, particularly those that require coordination across departments, identification of appropriate facilities, staffing considerations, and communication protocols, can be complex and resource-intensive. This is especially true for smaller municipalities with limited administrative capacity.

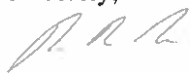
Accordingly, the League encourages consideration of a flexible or phased implementation timeline that allows municipalities adequate time to thoughtfully develop, review, and operationalize these plans in coordination with RIEMA and other stakeholders. Ensuring that these plans are not only completed, but also practical and effective, will ultimately better serve residents during emergency conditions.

The League also recognizes the value of a centralized, statewide notification system and the role that coordination with the National Weather Service and RIEMA can play in improving consistency and public awareness across jurisdictions. As this system is developed, continued collaboration with municipalities will be important to ensure it integrates smoothly with existing local communication systems and emergency response protocols.

The League looks forward to working collaboratively with the bill sponsor, RIEMA, and other partners to strengthen emergency preparedness across Rhode Island. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input and stand ready to assist in shaping an approach that is both effective and workable for our member communities.

Thank you again for your consideration of this legislation and for the opportunity to share the League's perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Rossi', written in a cursive style.

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House State Government and Elections